UFISINAN I MAGA'HÅGA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
MAGA'HÅGA • GOVERNOR

JOSHUA F. TENORIO
SIGUNDO MAGA'LÅHI • LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

35GL-19-1117
Speaker Tina Rose Muña Barnes

October 16, 2019

OCT 16 2019
Time 4:23 ( )AM (X)PM
Received By:

**HONORABLE TINA ROSE MUÑA BARNES**
Speaker
*I Mina'trentai Singko Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96932

**Re: Bill No. 155-35 (COR) – *An Act to Establish a Pilot Program for Youth Mental Health First Aid Training for Guam Department of Education and Guam Academy Charter Schools Personnel; and to Amend Section 5 of Part III, Chapter III, Public Law 35-36, to be Known as the "Youth Mental Health First Aid Act of 2019"***

Dear Madame Speaker:

Every bill submitted to me is important but few have the potential to save young lives. Between 2017 and 2018 alone, our island lost 130 people to suicide - with hundreds more attempting to take their own lives.

Although well-meaning people may recognize that something is amiss, we may not know how to intervene or how to direct those who may need help to proper treatment. Oftentimes, this means those in need of services do not receive them until it is too late. The pilot program this bill creates will train educators to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders. Training school staff is crucial as they are often the first point of contact for the most vulnerable population when it comes to mental health and suicide - our youth. Just as we care for their physical health, we must care for their mental health as well.

Suicide creates a perfect circle of loss around its victims, harming those who love them most. That is why the legislature's adoption of this measure is so important. Expanding the availability of Youth Mental Health First Aid adds to the mental health safety net that is so often neglected in our community.

2019 OCT 16 PM 4:42

1117

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Moreover, I support the legislature's foresight in funding this measure within the fiscal year 2020 Budget Act. Clearly, the mental health of our children and the adults they will become deserve our attention and full support.

Therefore, I have signed Bill 155-35 into law as **Public Law 35-40**.

*Senseremente,*

**LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO**
*Maga'hågan Guåhan*
Governor of Guam

Enclosure(s): Bill No. 155-35 *nka* Public Law 35-40

cc via email: *Sigundo Maga'låhen Guåhan*
Compiler of Laws

2019-6263
RCVD AT CENTRAL FILES
OCT 7'19 PM12:49
Jessica Cruz

*I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN*
**2019 (FIRST) Regular Session**

**CERTIFICATION OF PASSAGE OF AN ACT TO *I MAGA'HÅGAN GUÅHAN***

This is to certify that **Substitute Bill No. 155-35 (COR), "AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING FOR GUAM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND GUAM ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS PERSONNEL; AND TO *AMEND* SECTION 5 OF PART III, CHAPTER III, PUBLIC LAW 35-36, TO BE KNOWN AS THE "*YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID ACT OF 2019*,"** was on the 4th day of October 2019, duly and regularly passed.

**Tina Rose Muña Barnes**
**Speaker**

Attested:

**Amanda L. Shelton**
**Legislative Secretary**

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This Act was received by *I Maga'hågan Guåhan* this 7th day of October, 2019, at 12:49 o'clock P.M.

Assistant Staff Officer
*Maga'håga's* Office

APPROVED:

Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero
*I Maga'hågan Guåhan*

Date: 10/11/2019

Public Law No. 35-40

*I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN*
**2019 (FIRST) Regular Session**

**Bill No. 155-35 (COR)**
As amended by the Committee on General Government Operations, Appropriations, and Housing; and substituted and further amended on the Floor.

Introduced by:

Régine Biscoe Lee
Louise B. Muña
Telena Cruz Nelson
Amanda L. Shelton
Joe S. San Agustin
Telo T. Taitague
Tina Rose Muña Barnes
Jose "Pedo" Terlaje
William M. Castro
Kelly Marsh (Taitano), PhD
James C. Moylan
Sabina Flores Perez
Clynton E. Ridgell
Therese M. Terlaje
Mary Camacho Torres

**AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING FOR GUAM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND GUAM ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS PERSONNEL; AND TO *AMEND* SECTION 5 OF PART III, CHAPTER III, PUBLIC LAW 35-36, TO BE KNOWN AS THE "*YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID ACT OF 2019.*"**

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:**

**Section 1. Short Title.** This Act *shall* be known as the "*Youth Mental Health First Aid Act of 2019.*"

**Section 2. Legislative Findings and Intent.** *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds that in 2003, Guam was awarded a Strategic Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant for substance abuse prevention and control by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention. Utilizing the principles of outcomes-based prevention, the grant specified the creation of a State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) which would oversee the strategic use of data to inform and guide substance abuse prevention policy and program development on Guam. After a few years of data gathering and analysis by SEOW, the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center (GBHWC) Prevention & Training Branch, and the Governor's PEACE Council (Prevention Education and Community Empowerment Council), Guam's first State Epidemiological Profile (Epi Profile) was published in 2007.

In 2008, GBHWC received a youth suicide prevention grant as part of a SAMSHA program funded by the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. Strengthening and enhancing suicide data collection, surveillance, and analysis were some of the program's objectives. This task was assigned to SEOW. The data collected and analyzed as a part of this grant program was incorporated into the subsequent updates to Guam's Epi Profile.

By 2016, both of these grant programs had ended but the work of the Guam SEOW continued to be funded through another grant—Partnerships for Success. As of 2016, SEOW had served as the longest-running data workgroup on Guam, and is considered to be the island's definitive authority on substance abuse epidemiology; and, through its continuing work and publications, it will continue to provide the local evidence base for substance abuse prevention and mental health promotion. Most recently, through its lead, Dr. Annette M. David, SEOW published the Guam Epi Profile 2016 Update.

The key findings of the Epi Profile revealed that tobacco consumption by youth is higher in Guam than in the United States; notably, one (1) in three (3) high school students and nearly one (1) in four (4) middle school students reported using e-cigarettes. The median measure of marijuana use among students in Guam was higher than that of the mainland U.S.; notably, 4.5% of high school students reported having tried methamphetamines, 11% reported taking prescription drugs without a prescription, and in 2015, 37% of high school students reported that illicit drugs were offered, sold, or given to them on campus. In the area of mental illness, the Epi Profile revealed that the median measure of "persistent sadness" among Guam high school students was significantly higher than that of the U.S.

Finally, the Epi Profile revealed that our youth had "an elevated likelihood of suicidal ideation and attempts" than youth across the U.S. A notable area of concern is our age-adjusted suicide rate, which was reported to be 36.6 per 100,000, markedly higher than the U.S. rate. Suicide deaths occurred predominantly among younger people; from 2008 to 2016, in particular, fifty percent (50%) of all suicide victims were under thirty (30) years old.

In 2008, the National Council for Behavioral Health (NCBH) brought Mental Health First Aid to the United States; and, NCBH operates the program as "Mental Health First Aid USA." Mental Health First Aid is a public education program designed to help individuals understand mental illness, support timely intervention, and, ultimately, save lives. Specifically, it is an eight (8)-hour course that teaches people how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse disorders; and there are three (3) types of courses geared to providing aid to adults, youth, and public safety personnel. As a means of addressing the nation's mental health crisis, NCBH's goal has been to make Mental Health First Aid as common and readily available as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and traditional first aid.

In 2015, the U.S. Congress recognized the significance of this effort and passed "The Mental Health First Aid Act of 2015" with bipartisan support. This Act authorized Twenty Million Dollars ($20,000,000) in grants to fund Mental Health First Aid training programs across the country. To date, more than 1.5 million people have received Mental Health First Aid training through a network of over twelve thousand (12,000) certified instructors. Of these 1.5 million people, four hundred (400) are Guam residents, of which one hundred ten (110) are Guam Department of Education (GDOE) principals, assistant principals, teachers, counselors, and school aides. Of the twelve thousand (12,000) certified instructors, six (6) are GBHWC personnel, specially certified to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid training.

Youth Mental Health First Aid training is designed to teach adults how to help youth ages twelve (12) to eighteen (18) years old who may be experiencing a mental health or substance abuse challenge or crisis. Participants will review typical adolescent development, discuss unique risk factors and warning signs of youth mental health problems, and come to understand the significance of early intervention.

On Guam, our history and our cultural values teach us that prioritization of family and community are paramount to individualism. We are a society that, over centuries, has given genuine meaning to the saying, "it takes a village to raise a child." But, we cannot fight facts; the facts of our recent history are sounding an alarm, forcing us to recognize that our values are not translating. Something is broken within our families and, therefore, within our community. And, those who are suffering the most from this brokenness are our children, *i famagu'on-ta.*

It is the intent of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* to act before the already deafening alarm rings any louder, and before the next Epi Profile update reveals the depth of an even deeper wound. We can act by putting a Youth Mental Health First Aid tool

in the hands of those who spend the most time with our children, and do this through establishing and funding this pilot program for GDOE and GACS personnel. Fortunately, we have instructors at the ready; and surely, we will have recipients at the ready as well.

**Section 3. Youth Mental Health First Aid Training Pilot Program for Guam Department of Education (GDOE) and Guam Academy Charter Schools (GACS) Personnel.** The Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center (GBHWC) *shall* establish a pilot program for Youth Mental Health First Aid training for GDOE and GACS personnel.

(a) Training Recipients. Training *shall* be provided to five hundred (500) GDOE and GACS personnel on a first-come, first-served basis; provided, that each public school with students enrolled in grades six (6) through twelve (12) first be allotted a minimum of twenty (20) slots. Participation *shall* be limited to GDOE and GACS personnel directly responsible for student instruction or supervision at each school. Each participant who completes the training program *shall* receive a Certificate of Completion.

(b) Training Providers. Training *shall* be conducted by Certified Mental Health First Aid instructors from Guam. Instructors *shall* also be familiar with all local entities, including government, private sector, and non-profit organizations that provide mental health care services and resources for youth in need. This familiarity *shall* include knowledge of each entity's area of specialization, location, operating hours, contact information, client qualifications, and best methods of contact or referral procedures.

(c) Training Course Content. The training course provided pursuant to this Act *shall* be the Youth Mental Health First Aid training course designed by Mental Health First Aid USA, which is operated by the National Council

for Behavioral Health. This course introduces participants to common mental health challenges for youth and reviews typical adolescent development. It teaches a five (5)-step action plan for how to help adolescents in crisis and non-crisis situations. Specific topic areas covered include anxiety, depression, substance abuse disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders.

The content of the training course designed by Mental Health First Aid USA *shall* be supplemented with a local component. This local component *shall* include all of the information described in Subsection (b) about services and resources available for youth facing mental health challenges.

Participants who complete the program should be able to recognize the symptoms of common mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders, de-escalate crisis situations safely, and initiate timely referral to available resources.

(d) Certificates of Completion. Instructors *shall* be responsible for ensuring participants who complete all required hours also demonstrate understanding of the course content. Upon successful demonstration by a participant, instructors *shall* be responsible for issuing a Certificate of Completion to the participant. Instructors who issue such certificates on behalf of Mental Health First Aid USA must be authorized to do so on behalf of the organization.

**Section 4. Funding.** The Youth Mental Health First Aid Pilot Program *shall* be funded from the appropriation in Section 5 of Part III, Chapter III, Public Law 35-36. The appropriation in this Section *shall not* lapse and *shall* continue until fully expended.

**Section 5. Annual Reporting Requirement.** The Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center (GBHWC) *shall* maintain data on the total number of

individuals in Guam enrolled in the Youth Mental Health First Aid training program and the total number of those individuals enrolled who received a Certificate of Completion. Of these totals, the data *shall* specify the number of Guam Department of Education (GDOE) and Guam Academy Charter Schools (GACS) personnel who enrolled in the training program and the number who completed the training pursuant to this Act. GBHWC *shall* also maintain data on factors affecting youth mental health, including at a minimum, rates of tobacco use, alcohol consumption, drug use, depression, and suicide rates among youth ages twelve (12) to eighteen (18) years old. This data *shall* be compiled into an annual report which *shall* be transmitted by January 31 of each year to the Speaker of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*.

**Section 6. Amendment of Youth Mental Health First Aid Pilot Program Funding.** Section 5 of Part III, Chapter III, Public Law 35-36 is hereby *amended* to read:

"**Section 5. Youth Mental Health First Aid Pilot Program.** The sum of Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (**$300,000**) is appropriated from the General Fund to GBHWC to fund the Youth Mental Health First Aid Pilot Program, other mental health and suicide prevention strategies, and costs incurred for the State-Added questions on the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System survey."

**Section 7. Effective Date.** This Act *shall* be effective upon enactment.